

Billy Ward,  
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### One Great Mining Job

My great-uncle, Sam Nardi, is a loyal miner who worked in the mining buissness for more than forty-three years as an electrician, in Cleveland Cliffs Iron Mines.

My great-uncle Sam being one of the eight children in his family decided to follow his dad's footsteps in being a great miner. Since he did not go to college, he decided to go into the mining industry. My uncle Sam starting out underground at the Cliff Shaft in 1950 decided he wanted to go into the Navy. In 1951 he went into the Navy for four years and then coming back into the underground mines. Since there were so many mines in the are they were hiring every day when he applided for the mine. However, employment opportunities did not continue. Great-uncle Sam explained. In 1953 or 1954, it started to go down hill, The mines started to layoff and shutting down. By 1960, almost all the mines were down; only a couple were operating. When the mines started to get more advanced such as the pellet plant, the underground mines went out. The Mather B, the last underground mine in Marquette county, shut down in 1980. My great-uncle Sam was fortunate enough to get to work in quite a few of these underground and open-pit mines. "I worked at the Cliff Shaft mine, and the Eagle Mills Pellet Plant. I worked at the Ore Improvement Plant, and I worked at the General Shops," he stated. Before he became an electrician, he had to take some sort of training. Since he was working at the time he took a

course done through the mail, International Correspondence. As an electrician, he spent most of his time trouble shooting, installing, and maintaining equipment. He recalled working on live circuits and out on the west end and a flash of electricity and his hand was burned. "I was out of work for fifteen weeks," he explained. He burned his foot, and broke his foot one time. He stated "I was out for about thirteen weeks."

Other difficulties were caused by strikes. "A couple lasted over a hundred days. One was from July to December first," stated my great uncle Sam talking about the strikes in the mining industry. "Then they started going into pelletizing they had built a new pellet plant in Eagle Mills and Republic and Hombult went into an open pit," stated my uncle Sam. "The first pellet plant was dusty, hot and dusty." My uncle Sam says there was a lot of emphasis on safety in the mines because of the environment of the mine. "Even though safety started with you, you had to take a lot of training on safety," he explained.

Since they had so much emphasis on safety of the people, they had to start making the equipment more safe. At the time equipment was becoming more advanced, but also getting more safe. "Right the equipment is getting more advanced. A lot of the equipment that you do not repair," said my uncle Sam. He also commented that in some cases it would be cheaper to replace something than to repair it.

As people know, the more iron ore you use the less there is. While I was interviewing my uncle Sam, he made a comment about the ratio of waste rock to iron ore. He explained that the ratio of waste to iron is quite high. "They have to mine quite a

few tons of ore before they get one ton of iron ore," commented my great - uncle Sam. After a while when a mine runs out of iron ore they have to close down, but when a mine goes into a recession such as the steel mine did in Republic they have ore, but not the right type. "They didn't fail, they just ran out of demand," Explained my uncle Sam talking about the steel industry. As my uncle Sam continued, he talked about the mines changing to different types of ore all the time, and even the prospect about using a more concentrated ore.

After working in the mine for most of his life, he decided to retire. Now he has retired he enjoys spending time with his wife Helen and his child.

"I like working on my job, I liked the challenge, and the type of work."